REMARKS

Please reconsider the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Applicants thank the Examiner for carefully considering this application.

Disposition of Claims

Claims 1-26 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 11, and 18 are independent. The remaining claims depend, directly or indirectly, from claims 1, 11, and 18.

Claim Amendments

Claims 1, 2, 11, 12, 18, and 19 are amended to clarify the invention. Claims 4, 8, and 24 are amended to correct typographical errors. No new matter is added by way of these amendments. Support for these amendments can be found, for example, in pages 13-15 and 22-32 of the Specification.

Title Amendments

The title is amended herein to correct typographical errors.

Objection to the Drawings

The Examiner objected to Figures 2 and 5 for not meeting quality and margin spacing requirements. Figures 2 and 5 are amended herein to correct the quality and margin spacing. Accordingly, withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested.

Further, Applicants ask that the Examiner indicate all drawings are accepted in the next action.

Rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C § 102

Claims 1-5, 7-15, and 17-26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 7,010,582 B1 (hereinafter "Cheng"). To the extent that this rejection may still apply to the amended claims, the rejection is respectfully traversed.

As an initial matter, Applicants note that the Examiner stated that claim 23 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102. However, the Examiner provided no basis for this rejection. *See* Office Action dated April 9, 2007 at page 4. Furthermore, the Examiner also stated that claim 23 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) and did provide a basis for that rejection. *See* Office Action dated April 9, 2007 at page 14. Therefore, for purposes of this response, Applicants are assuming that the Examiner intended to reject claim 23 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) and erroneously included claim 23 in the list of claims rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102. If this assumption is incorrect, clarification is requested.

Turning to the rejection of the claims, "[a] claim is anticipated only if *each and every element* as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference." Further, "[t]he identical invention must be shown in as complete detail as is contained in the ... claim." MPEP § 2131 (emphasis added). Applicants respectfully assert that Cheng does not expressly or inherently describe each and every element of claims 1-5, 7-15, 17-22, and 24-26.

Amended independent claims 1 and 18 recite a method of performing single sign-on services that requires a *central service provider* and an artifact that can be used to

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retrieve assertion information to authorize user access from the central service provider.

Specifically, claims 1 and 18 recite, in part,

> generating, by a central service provider, assertion information comprising identity information associated with a user ... ;
> generating, by said central service provider, a plurality of artifacts that are associated with said assertion information; and

> sending, by said *central service provider*, said plurality of artifacts to a group of trusted partner sites ... , wherein each of said group of trusted partner sites can *use an artifact* of said plurality of artifacts *to retrieve said assertion information from said central service provider to* individually *authorize access* by said user.

Emphasis added.

In contrast, Cheng discloses a method for providing multi-domain, single sign-on (MDSSO) services that does not include a central service provider or the artifact as recited in claims 1 and 18. More specifically, in the method disclosed by Cheng, when a multiple domain single sign-on (MDSSO) server in a group of related MDSSO servers receives a request to access a protected URL from a browser on an end user device that does not include access control information, *i.e.*, an MDSSO cookie, the MDSSO server authenticates the user and generates an MDSSO cookie. *See* Cheng at col. 6, lines 38-59. This MDSSO cookie is valid at any other MDSSO server in the group of related MDSSO servers. *See* Cheng at col. 6, lines 62-64.

The MDSSO server then initiates a process of using the browser on the end user device to send the MDSSO cookie along with a hidden form to each of the other MDSSO servers. *See* Cheng at col. 8, lines 28-67. This process causes the browser to store the MDSSO cookie in a cookie jar for each of the other MDSSO servers. *See* Cheng at col. 9, lines 1-37 and Abstract. The browser may then use the MDSSO cookie to access any of the MDSSO servers without requiring the user to re-authenticate. *See* Cheng at col. 6,

lines 38-42. Furthermore, when an MDSSO server receives an access request that contains the MDSSO cookie, the MDSSO server merely checks that the MDSSO cookie is valid before granting access. *See* Cheng at col. 6, lines 38-42. Cheng is absolutely silent regarding the use of an MDSSO cookie by one MDSSO server to retrieve anything further from the browser sending the request or from any other MDSSO server in order to grant access.

Clearly, the method of Cheng is completely different from that cited in amended claims 1 and 18. Cheng does not disclose generating artifacts that can be used by trusted partner sites to retrieve assertion information to authorize user access from a central service provider, much less generating those artifacts by the central service provider and sending those artifacts to the trusted partner sites by the central service provider as required by claims 1 and 18.

Amended independent claim 11 recites, in part,

receiving a first artifact at a first trusted partner site from a central service provider, ... , *said first artifact associated with assertion information* comprising identity information associated with a user, ... ;
sending said first artifact, by said first trusted partner site, to said central service provider ... *to retrieve said assertion information*;
receiving said assertion information from said central service provider at said first trusted partner site ...; and
determining authorization for said user to access said first trusted partner site *based on said assertion information.*

Emphasis added.

As discussed above, Cheng discloses a method in which access control information, *i.e.*, an MDSSO cookie, is initially generated by one MDSSO server in a group of related MDSSO servers and then stored on a browser in cookie jars associated with the other MDSSO servers. The browser may then use this MDSSO cookie when

accessing any of the MDSSO servers. An MDSSO server receiving the MDSSO cookie from the browser allows access without any further authentication of the user provided the MDSSO cookie is valid. The MDSSO server is not required to retrieve further information from the MDSSO server that originally generated the MDSSO cookie or from the browser sending the MDSSO cookie before allowing access. Therefore, Cheng cannot possibly disclose sending an artifact to a central service provider by a trusted partner site to retrieve assertion information, receiving the requested assertion information by the trusted partner site, and determining authorization based on the received assertion information as required by claim 11.

In view of the above, Cheng fails to expressly or inherently describe each and every limitation of amended independent claims 1, 11, and 18. Thus, independent claims 1, 11, and 18 are patentable over Cheng for at least the reasons given above. Dependent claims 2-5, 7-10, 12-15, 17, 19-22, and 24-26 are allowable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C § 103

Claims 6, 16, and 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Cheng in view of U.S. Patent Application No. 2003/0177388 A1 (hereinafter "Botz"). To the extent that this rejection may still apply to the amended claims, the rejection is respectfully traversed.

To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, "[f]irst, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to

combine reference teachings. Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success. Finally, the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all the claim limitations." MPEP § 2143. Further, "all words in a claim must be considered in judging the patentability of that claim against the prior art." MPEP § 2143.03. Applicants respectfully assert that the references, when combined, fail to teach or suggest all the limitations of claims 6, 16, and 23.

As discussed above, Cheng fails to disclose each and every limitation of independent claims 1, 11, and 18. Furthermore, Botz fails to disclose what Cheng lacks as is evidenced by the fact that the Examiner relies on Botz merely to disclose the use of the Security Assertions Markup Language (SAML). Thus, Cheng and Botz, whether considered separately or in combination, do not teach or suggest all of the limitations of independent claims 1, 11, and 18.

In view of the above, independent claim 1, 11, and 18 are patentable over Cheng and Botz for at least the reasons given above. Dependent claims 6, 16, and 23 are allowable over Cheng and Botz for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Applicants believe this reply is fully responsive to all outstanding issues and places this application in condition for allowance. If this belief is incorrect, or other issues arise, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned or his associates at the telephone number listed below. Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account 50-0591 (Reference Number 03226/475001; P8956).

Dated: July 6, 2007　　　　　　　　　　　　Respectfully submitted,

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Attachments: Replacement Sheets (8)